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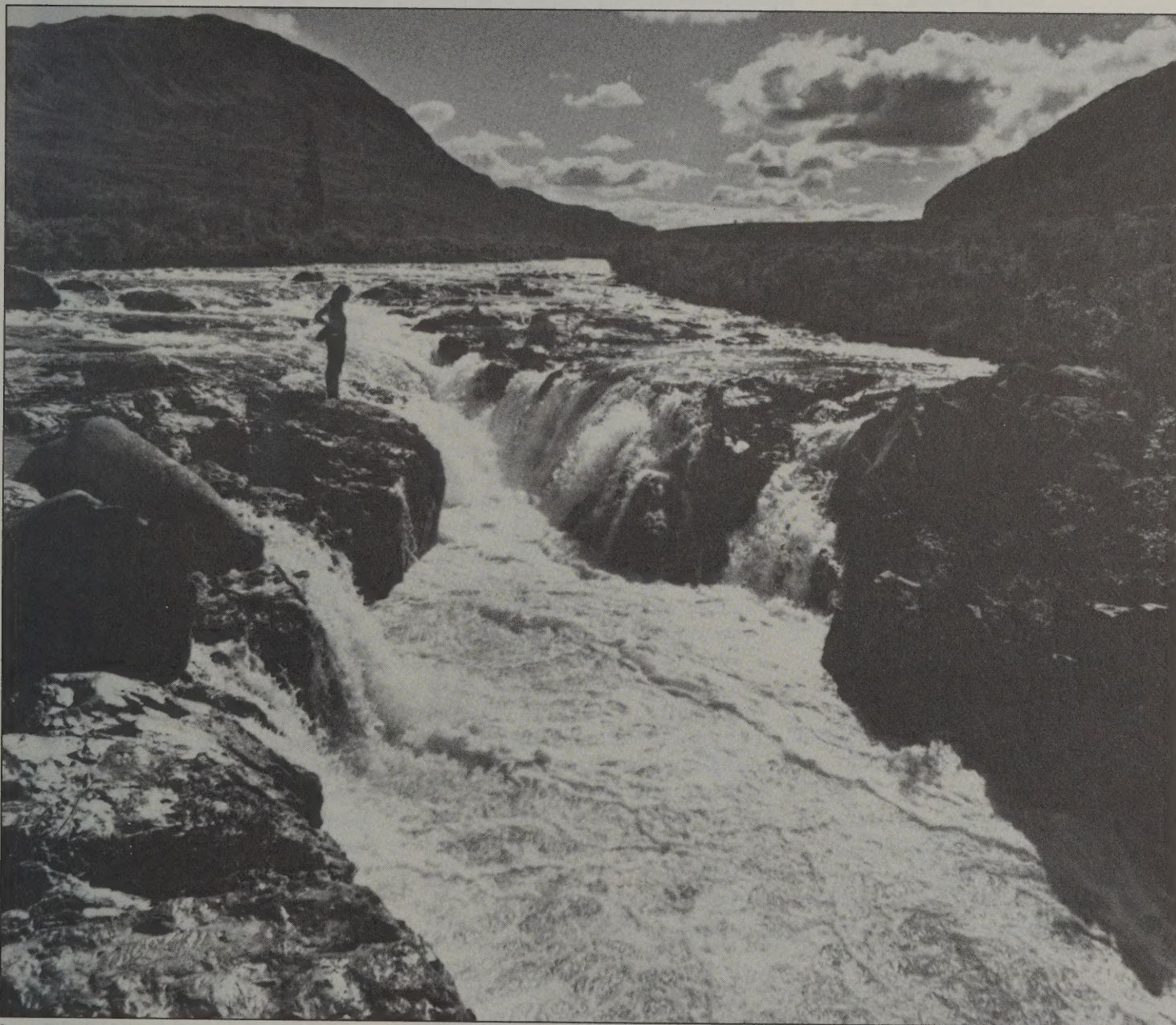
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Issue 36 May 1992

Traveling the wild Delta River



One of six National Wild and Scenic Rivers managed by BLM in Alaska, the Delta offers a three-day trip through the Alaska Range.

u.s. department of the interior • bureau of land management

Delta River: from flat to fierce

by Ed Bovy

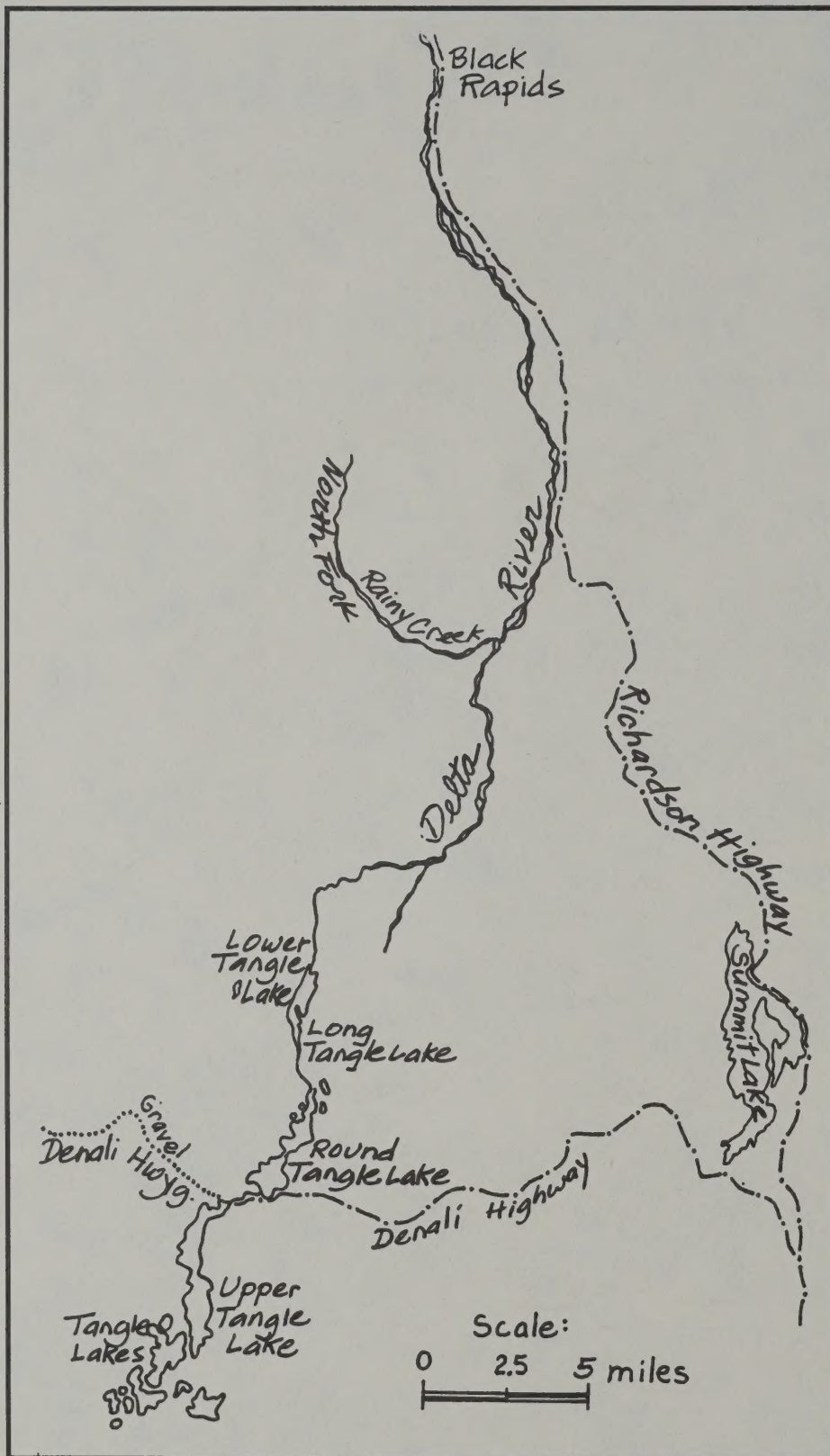
DELTA RIVER, ALASKA—Fall comes quickly to the alpine country around the Tangle Lakes.

In August when most of the nation is gripped in the hottest days of summer, the days are already getting shorter along the Delta River and the evening air starts nibbling at the inner corners of your lungs. The tundra responds with a blaze of orange, red and gold daubed on the hillsides with careless abandon.

At the headwaters of the river, crisp night air slaps the Tangle Lakes, their shallow waters warmed by 24-hour sunlight in June and July. Tremendous fog banks appear in the morning, dew dripping from any clothing and equipment left out overnight to dry.

Upon awakening and sleepily poking my head out the tent I forgot where I was in a moment of panic. I was expecting another blue sky day. Instead a thick swirling pea soup fog painted a surreal scene reminding me of the moors of Scotland. My ears strained to hear the hound of the Baskervilles and my eyes searched for Sherlock Holmes or even a Hobbit. "Where am I?" I wondered.

Such fog is localized and a scamper up to some high spots could reveal the view above the clouds. I elected to sleep in and wait the spotlight of a rising sun to burn holes in the sky and reveal the blue promise of another day on the river. Enjoy and appreciate this, I told myself, as such wonders, like the seasons, are ephemeral in Alaska.



The Delta River heads at the Tangle Lakes and flows north, emptying into the Tanana River at Big Delta. This map shows the part of the river that is most popular for recreation.

in 80 scenic miles



The Tangle Lakes, heading toward the outlet.

I found that August was a fine time to visit the Delta but any time between mid June and midSeptember is certainly worth the effort.

Larry Kajdan, BLM's recreation planner in Glennallen, has been down the Delta River more than two dozen times. "I like hiking in the area around the lower Tangle Lakes.

You can scramble up on the glacial features and look around in all directions. There's no thick brush, so the hiking is easy and the views are fantastic. In August the blueberries are plentiful and the afternoons can be warm and sunny. What more could you want?" says Kajdan.

The Delta has outstanding grayling fishing too. "There's been lot's of them on every trip I've taken," says Kajdan, "and when the ice goes out on the lakes, usually in early June, the lake trout are real hungry. They'll head for the outlet and feed on snails in the shallows."

It's hard to take a trip on the Delta without seeing some wildlife too. "I've seen moose above and below the portage. A few miles farther down, Garrett Creek comes in. Scope out the hillsides towards the east and look for grizzly bears. They

are there more often than not," says Kajdan.

Wayne Boden has been visiting the Delta since 1962. "It's one of my favorite parts of Alaska. There is variety in the landscape and you actually travel right through the Alaska Range," he says.

His most memorable experience on the Delta was in its headwaters up in the Upper Tangle Lakes area, south of the Denali Highway. "We were up there on a moose hunt in mid-September. The weather was perfect. I climbed up on a small ridge to look around and was surprised to see a raft of 93 trumpeter swans staging for their fall migration. That same trip we counted about 50 tundra (whistling) swans and maybe 500 ducks mallards, teal, widgeons, pintails, shovelers all staging too. We also saw 31 caribou and 11 moose. It was heavenly, just what you'd expect in Alaska."

Boden notices the changes between 1962 and 1992. He says, "For one thing, there are superior boat launch facilities and a nice portage trail. Back in '62 you had to pack your canoe through the brush and there was little evidence of use. You

Facts and stats

Season

Early June to mid-September, depending on ice breakup and precipitation

August daylight

August 1: 5 a.m. to 10:33 p.m.

August 31: 6:27 a.m. to 8:55 p.m.

August temperatures

Average maximum: 62.5, average minimum: 38.7

Record high: 87; record low: 20

Put in

Tangle Lakes Campground at Mile 21, Denali Highway

Take out

Mile 212.5 Richardson Highway. A 49-mile vehicle shuttle is required.

Recommended craft

Canoe, kayak or 12- to 14-foot craft

Trip length

Two to three days, covering 20 river miles and 9 lake miles

Water

Class I, II, and III; 22 miles of clear water, 7 miles of glacier water

Potential hazards

Bears, sweepers, wrapped canoe fragments; cold, wet weather and high winds

Portage

A 1/2-mile maintained trail around waterfalls and across steep, rocky terrain; trail is divided into two sections with a pond crossing after the first 1/4 mile

Maps

U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps Mt. Hayes A-4, B-4, A-5, C-5; Gulkana D-4

Supplies, lodging

Two commercial lodges on the Denali Highway near the Tangle Lakes and another at Paxson provide food, gas and lodging. There is a public phone is at Paxson Lodge.

really had a wilderness experience. You still can have a fantastic trip, but you will see that people have camped before in some of the choicer spots. But the fishing is every bit as good as I remember it 30 years ago."

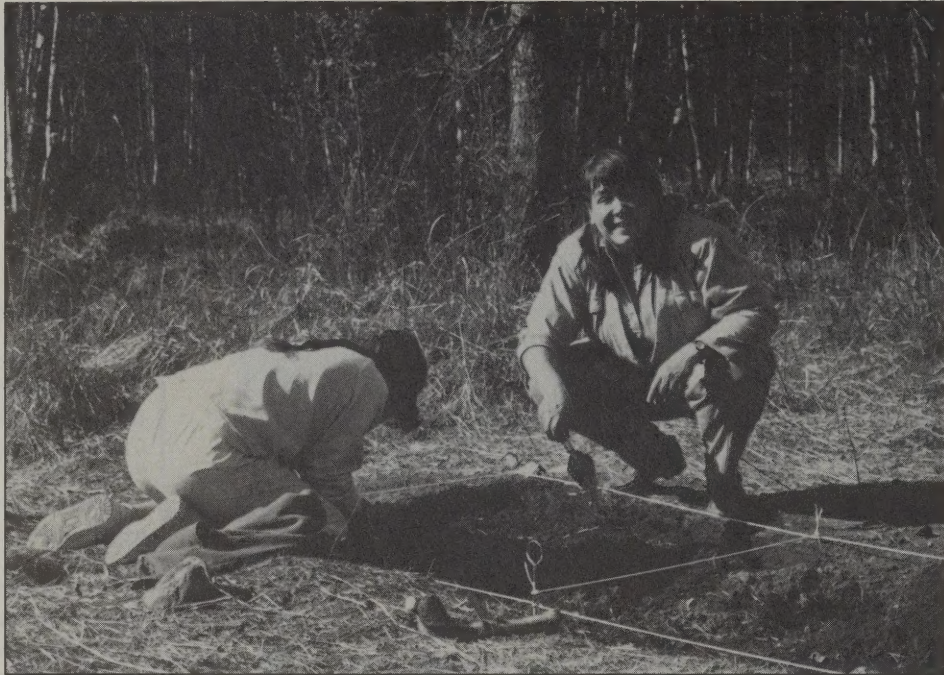
The Delta is one of the few rivers in Alaska with convenient road access at both the put in and take out points.

Work moves ahead for environmental education center in Anchorage

Each May, for as long as she can remember, Julie Steele pulls out her "bag of bones" and heads for the woods of Campbell Tract in east Anchorage. The BLM Anchorage District archaeologist locates a pit from years past and digs into the cold, black dirt placing animal bones, skulls and artifacts. Then, during Outdoor Week,

hundreds of Anchorage School District sixth graders dig up those bones using skills taught by the archaeologist. Steele is one of many federal and state employees who teach at Outdoor Week, an environmental education program conducted each year on Campbell Tract.

Although Outdoor Week is currently the biggest environmental education program BLM is involved with in Alaska, (BLM co-sponsors the event with the



This year's Outdoor Week is being held as usual in the woods and along Campbell Creek at the BLM's Campbell Tract in Anchorage. Above, Anchorage District Archaeologist Julie Steele teaches excavating techniques to a sixth grade student during last year's event. Many BLM specialists plus employees and volunteers from many other federal and state agencies and private organizations instruct the several thousand sixth graders who take part each spring.

Anchorage School District), BLM aims to get involved with environmental education in an even bigger way.

BLM plans to do that by building an environmental education center on its Campbell Tract in 1994. It would be the first such facility built and operated by the Bureau. The center would feature a central multi-purpose building with space for group and class gatherings, administrative and work space, and a kitchen. There would also be interpretive trails, dormitory cabins to accommodate 80, an

access road, and parking.

BLM Campbell Creek project manager Kathy Liska says, "The facility will be rustic looking, will have modern utilities, and will accommodate the physically challenged."

She adds, "This project is exciting for the BLM because the immediate benefactors of the center will be people living in Anchorage. The center allows us more direct contact with the public to teach environmental principles, concepts, and relationships.

Anchorage School District students will be the center's primary users

and may participate in overnight environmental education experiences as well as day trips. Curriculum is being developed by BLM and its partners. Major partners are the school district and the Anchorage Committee for Resource Education. "The project is the result of a partnership between many public and private sectors," says

Liska.

Funding has been appropriated for the architectural design of the center, which will operate year-round. Construction will begin in 1993 and the center is scheduled to open in 1994.

In early April, BLM released the draft Campbell Creek Environmental Education Center Development Plan and Environmental Assessment and accepted public comment on the project until the end of April.

—Danielle Allen

With a little help from BLM, Nome High School wins Times-Mirror grant

Iditarod Dog Sled Race champion Martin Buser wasn't the only big winner in Nome on March 11th. A group of Nome high school biology students also won a significant prize—a grant supporting their salmon hatchery project.

In ceremonies at the high school that afternoon, BLM-Alaska State Director Edward Spang presented a check for \$2,588 on behalf of the Times-Mirror Conservation Council. It is one of the first grants in the nation presented by this group.

The check was used to buy a second aquarium for the biology class project of hatching and rearing salmon eggs. The 180-gallon aquarium is refrigerated to maintain a constant temperature and recycles all the water every 90 seconds.

Biology teacher Nancy Bauer, who is working on the project said, "With the BLM help—the grant from the Times Mirror Group—we bought another "Living Stream" tank. We're making a classroom of an instream incubator so we can just look at the tank and say, 'This is what's going on at Hobson Creek.'

The pink salmon eggs came from the Alaska Department of Fish and

Game hatchery at Hobson Creek and the coho from the Snake River.

Fish raised in the classroom are released back into the same streams from which the parent stocks came, increasing salmon stocks in the Nome area for subsistence and sports use.

Besides learning how fish develop, the students are also learning skills needed to work at a fish hatchery.

"Next year" said Bauer, "I'll have the kids set up experiments that study the relationship of temperature to development and how the amount or types of food affect development."

Times Mirror Magazines' President and CEO Francis P. Pandolfi wrote in the letter accompanying the check, "You are the winner of one of the first grants we are making through the Times Mirror Magazines Partnership for Environment Education. Your project competed with about 60 proposals and is one of eight we have selected to support."

Since 1990 BLM has donated \$12,500 to the project as its part of a three-way cooperative agreement with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the school. That money has been used toward purchase of equipment and supplies.

Last summer, BLM



Nome Schools Superintendant Robert Kinna and BLM State Director Ed Spang examine specimen salmon fry from the living stream aquarium. These will be returned to the aquarium, where students will study their development.

hosted a Times-Mirror Conservation Council tour of BLM activities around Alaska, including the Seward Peninsula, where they visited the Nome high school fish hatchery project.

Mark Edmiston, vice-president of the Times-Mirror Corporation later proposed the conservation council fund a grant.

In presenting the check to Nome-Beltz High School Principal George Ihly, BLM State Director Spang noted the cooperative roles played by others involved in the project. "It takes a cooperative approach and a long-term commitment to make these kind of contributions," he said.

According to a letter from Pandolfi, "The funds to support these grants are generated through a portion of the money from advertisements that contain environmental awareness messages."

—Rob McWhorter/Jane Mangus

Have a wild summer—watch wildlife



Cow moose browses at a pond along the Dalton Highway in northern Alaska.

As more and more Americans turn to the outdoors for recreation, they are saturating already popular park and recreation areas. Interest in wildlife is expanding even faster than general recreation use. Alaska is an excellent example of this trend; Alaskans avoid Denali National Park all summer because it is jammed full of tourists looking for wildlife.

BLM can help. "We believe that BLM lands offer some of the best opportunities for the average touring public to see and observe wildlife in Alaska," says Gene Ervine, BLM's state Watchable Wildlife coordinator. "For example if you are traveling along the Dalton Highway, you have a good chance to see grizzly bear, moose and bands of Dall sheep with wolves and muskox being rare treats. In early spring, thousands of birds utilize the open waters of lakes along the Dalton Highway as temporary resting places while on their way to their nesting areas on the north slope. You can see moose and nesting waterfowl most of the summer along the Denali Highway and the Taylor Highway offers a

good chance to see moose and caribou."

"Watchable Wildlife" is a new BLM program designed to increase the public's opportunities to photograph, study or simply watch the 3000+ species living on the 270 million acres of BLM-managed public lands in the United States. Through this program, BLM is identifying and enhancing areas where the opportunity to view wild animals is greatest.

Some BLM efforts underway for Watchable Wildlife in Alaska include:

- coordinating with birding clubs in the Fairbanks area to develop watchable wildlife information for the Pinnell Mountain National Recreational Trail
- installing attractive information panels along the Dalton, Taylor and Denali highways. Other agencies have been impressed with the BLM designs and have expressed a willingness to share the expense of developing additional signs.
- inventorying habitat along the Dalton Highway to develop information for additional information handouts and signing

• installing a wildlife viewing blind at a lake along the Dalton Highway this summer

• working with the Fish and Wildlife Service and Princess Tours towards producing a watchable wildlife viewing guide for the Dalton Highway

• looking at the recently passed transportation act to find ways to take advantage of funding opportunities available for enhancing watchable wildlife viewing opportunities

Watchable Wildlife is part of BLM's Fish and Wildlife 2000 and Recreation 2000 programs which are intended to improve management of wildlife and recreation resources on the public lands.

A special insert in this issue of *Frontiers* explains the national program in more detail. A second insert gives specific information on prime viewing areas along the road-accessible BLM lands throughout the state. For additional copies, write, BLM Public Affairs Office, 222 West 7th, #13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513.

—Ed Bovy

New ranger travels a remote beat



Ranger Mike Billbe checks a remote cabin to make sure everything is okay.

BLM's Kobuk District, which manages 30 million acres of mostly roadless land in northwestern Alaska, has received its first ranger, Mike Billbe, who came from the heat of the Phoenix desert to snow-covered Fairbanks last February.

"There are very few roads on public lands in the Kobuk District," Billbe says. "My patrolling will be by snowmachine, four-wheeler, air or water. I'll be available to public land users for information and assistance."

Billbe has already contributed to resource education by working with programs for school children and representing BLM at fairs. He will have plenty of other opportunities for meeting the public as he travels to the far-flung communities of Nome, Kotzebue, and little-known points in between.

Billbe graduated from Arizona State University in outdoor recreation, then worked in resources and recreation for the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service. He spent nine years as a ranger for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. After joining BLM in 1984, Billbe worked with BLM's ranger programs in California and Arizona.

"I personally find it satisfying to be with an agency that manages public lands for people with a variety of interests and needs," he said.

—Sharon Durgan Wilson

BLM surveyors start summer field work all over Alaska

They fly in by helicopter, most likely a Bell 206 or Huey 500. They set up a tent camp on the edge of the airstrip or on a barge. Set up the sleep-in tent with fold-out cots. Then, some set up the office. Others take off for work. By that time the cook's got the pot boiling. Maybe, next day, they install refrigerators, showers and laundry facilities.

This is how Dan Johnson, chief of BLM-Alaska's branch of field surveys, describes the start of a large surveying operation.

BLM chooses survey areas based on the Patent Plan Process begun in

April, 1985. In this process, areas are nominated for field survey. Survey users, mainly Native corporations and the State of Alaska, participate in these nominations.

This year, work on two sites, numbers 1 and 13 on the 1992 Field Survey Program map, are contracts BLM let to two Anchorage-based firms.

- LCMF Limited will survey 221 Native allotment parcels near Kwigillingok and Kongiganak for \$1,148,052.21.
- R & M Consultants will do 264 parcels near Sheldon Point and Emmonak for \$964,834.59.

Surveying 239 parcels of Native allotments at Emmonak, project 13, is one of the large operations Johnson mentions. Two 20-person crews will survey in the Emmonak area. One of the crews will set up housekeeping on a barge near New Hamilton while they survey the east half. The other will pitch a tent, camp near Emmonak village and survey the west half.

By the looks of things, BLM survey crews will work over much of the state this season. Most projects begin by June 1. The season ends in September.

—Ella Wright

BIA grubstakes some BLM surveying in northern Alaska

Two two-person BLM crews will soon set out to battle *no-see-ums* and other insects to survey Native allotments. The battle will rage from mid-July through the first part of August in northeast Alaska on the open tundra rising to the base of Brooks Range.

Dan Webb, who manages BLM's Cadastral survey patent plan process and also serves as BLM's liaison to BIA-Alaska, said, "This is the first year BLM-Alaska received BIA funding for such a project. The appropriation will cover field costs such as wages, food, helicopter and survey monuments.

BIA and BLM representatives in Washington, D.C. signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and authorized funds for Bureau-wide projects a few months ago. The two agencies sign an agreement each year to allow for the provision of cadastral surveys on Indian land.

Webb said, "BLM did projects at Slana and Gulkana last year, but they were cost/reimbursable.

"The BIA appropriation will cover field costs such as the wages, the food, the helicopter and the monuments."

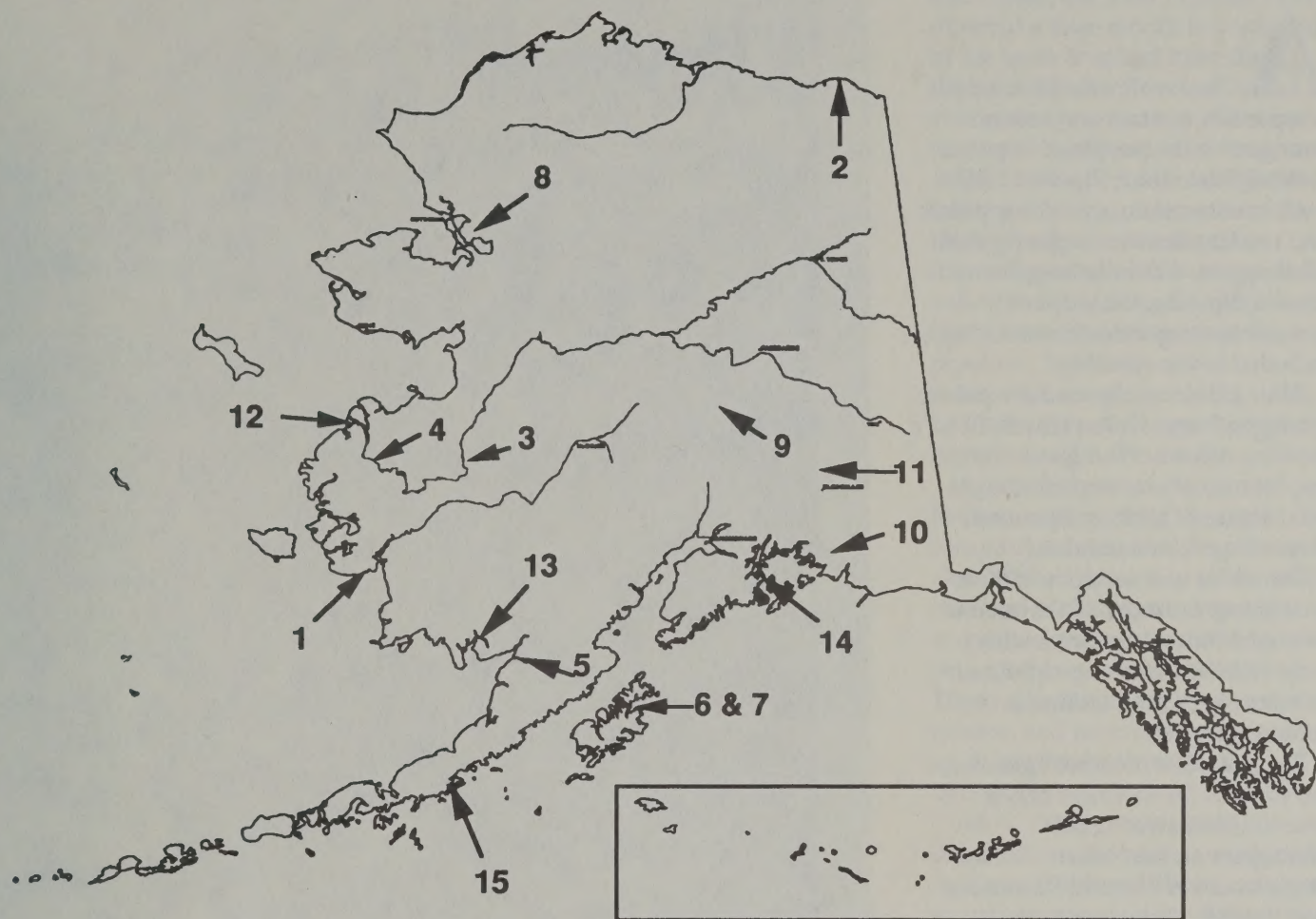
BIA Realty Specialist Glenda Miller of Juneau, Alaska, says the Natives "decided with limited funding they wanted to be sure the \$50,000 was spent on one project where a group of allotments are located adjacent to each other."

She said, "BIA and tribal contractors decided that since only a few Native allotments in the Arctic Slope had been surveyed and certified, lands with the Fairbanks agency should be a priority."

—Ella Wright

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1992 Field Survey Program



Projects, Places and Parcels
1992 Survey Program

<u>Map Key</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>No. Parcels or Miles</u>	<u>No. & Type of Surveys</u>
1	Kwigillingok	221	96 U.S. S.
2	Kaktovik	7	7 U.S. S.
3	Quigley Ridge	17	13 Mineral surveys
4	Holy Cross	80	14c surveys
5	Pitkas Point	20	14c surveys
6	South Naknek	4	14c surveys
7	Afognak	2	14c surveys
8	Ouzinkie	6	14c surveys
9	Noorvik	14	14c surveys
10	Kantishna	100 miles	Rectangular
11	Chugach East	446 miles	Rectangular
12	Chistochina	56 miles	Rectangular
13	Emmonak	503	U.S. S.
14	Dillingham	20	14c surveys
15	Chenega	7	14c surveys
16	Chignik Lagoon	19	14c surveys

Watching over the pipeline • • • while

Alaska oil, and its constant companion, controversy, are no strangers to the people of the Federal/State Joint Pipeline Office.

As events continue to draw public and media attention to the flow of oil along the 800-mile long Trans-Alaska Pipeline, the work of government agencies in this office is included in the scrutiny.

"Our job is usually under a public spotlight," says Nolan Heath, BLM's pipeline officer. "But given the importance of safe and continued production of oil from the north slope, it's understandable."

The office was set up in 1990 to coordinate the work of the several state and federal agencies with responsibilities for oversight and monitoring of the pipeline, a common carrier.

The principal member agencies are the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management; the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources; and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Pipeline Safety. Other agencies represented are the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Jerry Brossia of the Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources said, "The Joint Pipeline Office offers unique opportunities for both the State and the Federal government by sharing staff, knowledge, office space, and equipment. Through this, they develop integrated work programs that accomplish broad public goals. These goal include the continual safe flow of North Slope hydrocarbons to market, protecting the environment, and maintaining the integrity of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline."

The office has expanded over the past two years to its current level of 45 people. They bring a wide range

of training and experience to the office. Included are technical experts in pipeline safety, oil spill contingencies, engineering, land law, computer science, geophysics and library research. Their training and experience provides the basis for carrying out the Fully Integrated Monitoring Plan that was developed to oversee the various technical and environmental issues of this important industry.

New technology and the way it relates to the transportation of oil frequently generates controversy. This has included oil spill response, pipeline monitoring, pigs, pipe coating, quality assurance and

quality control programs, and engineering.

For example, Alyeska Pipeline Co. by 1987 had developed a new pig that increased sensitivity in detecting corrosion imperfections (or "anomalies") in the pipeline. The pig, which uses ultrasonic technology, travels through the pipeline, carried along by the flow of oil making its way to tidewater at Valdez. As it travels, the pig measures the pipe wall thickness, detecting variations. Results are analyzed by a specialized computer program to identify areas that need to be physically inspected, and that require remedial action.



Looking north where the Trans-Alaska Pipeline dips beneath the Delta River

the world watches the watchers



Peaks of the Alaska Range make a snowy backdrop.

With this new technology, specific areas on the pipeline, including the Atigun Pass area, were identified as having general areas of corrosion. This generated national media coverage and Congressional attention.

During 1990 and 1991, Alyeska replaced about eight and a half miles of pipe in the Atigun River flood plain of the Brooks Range. The pipeline replacement project was completed in early 1991.

Corrosion monitoring is continuing as an ongoing work project. Additional repair work will continue at specific locations affected by corrosion along the

entire 800-mile pipeline.

The ongoing monitoring of the pipeline, besides attracting international public and media attention from the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 and national debate over opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, increased the spotlight on the work of the Joint Pipeline Office.

More controversy came in the fall of 1990 when a worker who had been fired from a company hired to do inspection work on the pipeline complained of infractions in the testing program. Acting on the complaints, which dealt with the integrity of corrosion investigation

and repair, the Joint Pipeline Office directed a four-month investigation of the work that had been done. Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. did extensive excavation to allow re-testing of questioned work.

The results of that investigation, while pointing up elements of the testing program that needed improvement, did not change the validity of decisions that had been made about the integrity of the pipeline. Media provided substantial coverage of this work, and Members of Congress requested copies of audit documents.

Again this year, a number of former employees of the pipeline company have made allegations about the acceptability of materials installed in the pipeline system, inspection procedures, and test data provided to government officials. These allegations are now under review, and controversy is once again on the front pages of newspapers.

All of these events have put demands on the people working in the Joint Pipeline Office to respond to various requests for documents, some dating back to the early stages of pipeline construction.

According to Jerry Brossia, "Dealing with demands created by ongoing public scrutiny and controversy is something that comes with oversight of a vital resource like oil that affects economy and jobs for not just the State of Alaska, but the entire nation."

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline carries about 1.8-million barrels of oil each day to tankers in Valdez harbor. This is about 25 percent of the total domestic oil production in the United States. In addition, the royalties from the oil production provide the major funding (about 85%) for Alaska State government.

The Joint Pipeline Office and BLM management will continue to play an important role in Alaska and the U.S. for all who benefit from oil production.

—David F. Vickery

The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution has chosen Larry Knapman, a natural resource specialist in BLM-Alaska's Kobuk District, to receive its **National Conservation Award**. This award recognizes Knapman for more than 30 years of outstanding achievement in conservation work. The DAR's National Conservation Committee is dedicated to the preservation of the natural resources of our country.

"Larry was one of the first resource specialists to undertake efforts for improved riparian area management," said Kobuk District Manager Helen Hankins. "He single-handedly conducted extensive inventories of riparian resources over vast acreages in western Alaska. Last year he provided on-site coordination for a week-long BLM riparian area management training class that was attended by federal and state agencies and members of the public interested in riparian area management."

Knapman has taught fireline construction and reclamation for the Canadian government and has spoken about conservation for many organizations, including the DAR and Fairbanks school classes.

Landmark Gap North Trail has been reopened to off-road vehicle traffic. The trail, which starts at mile 24.6 of the Denali Highway, had been temporarily closed for an archaeological study of the area.

In announcing the opening, Glennallen District Manager Gene Keith said, "Based on the archaeological study, we have determined that the trail can be reopened to ORV's all the way to Landmark Gap Lake, a popular fishing site."

The Alaska Press Women has presented its **1992 Communicator of Achievement** award to Ella V. Wright, a BLM Alaska State Office writer/editor. Wright won the award for service to the community, professional achievement and leadership in both the Alaska Press Women and the National Federation of Press Women. Wright was named outstanding volunteer for the Anchorage School District in 1991 and outstanding alumna of Alaska Methodist University/Alaska Pacific University in 1989. She currently serves as the National Federation of Press Women's Minority Committee Director.

For the second year, President Jim Hermiller of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company has given BLM Alaska State Director Ed Spang a **\$10,000 donation for the Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students (RAPS)**. The donation will support stipends and transportation for the students. Alyeska will also employ a RAPS student for the summer.

In April BLM relinquished 4,525 acres of land within Chugach National Forest to the State of Alaska. The land, in the Winner Creek and Glacier Creek areas north of Alyeska Ski Resort, will then be reconveyed to the Municipality of Anchorage, which plans to use it to develop and add acreage to the resort. In signing the conveyance document, BLM-Alaska State Director Ed Spang said, "This land contained 181 federal mining claims. Close cooperation by the state, the municipality, the Forest Service, the BLM and the Heritage Land Bank made today's transfer possible." The state selected this land in 1989 for reconveyance to the municipality. The mining claims were purchased by the Heritage Land Bank.



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